

CITY OF NEWARK, NJ'S AFRICAN-AMERICAN ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

Interview with Edna R. Thomas - October 7, 1996

Q: My name is C. Alma Flagg, and I am an interviewer with the Scott-Krueger Mansion Cultural History Project. It is an oral history project associated with the development of the mansion as an African-American History Center. It is October 7, 1996, and I am in the office of Mrs. Edna R. Thomas at Solo House in the City of Newark. It's a great pleasure to be with you here this morning, Mrs. Thomas, and I'd like to begin by asking you to tell your entire name, where you were born, about your parents, and if you care to, we'd like to know the date of your birth for this history.

Thomas: Well, I was born in Newark, June 17, 1941. My mother's name is Clara Mayfield Ray and my father's name is Ellis Worzell Ray. I have one sister named Nancy Ray. And that's all my immediate family. I've had three uncles who lived in Newark.

Q: You have had what?

Thomas: Three uncles.

Q: I see.

Thomas: Who lived in Newark. And six who live in Virginia.

Q: Six more uncles?

Thomas: Yes.

Q: You have an abundance of uncles.

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Thomas: Yeah. A number of men in our family. So I was spoiled a lot because I was the only girl that came along. And so I knew how to handle all of my uncles.

Q: Imagine that.

Thomas: Yeah. Each one of them. Each one. Education was always the hallmark of our family. I was surprised to see my grandmother write because I thought she didn't know how to write. You know, when you get educated up here they say people down south can't do anything. So I thought my grandmother was one of those until I went down and stayed with her a while and I saw her sitting at the secretary. That's what she called it her secretary.

Q: I see.

Thomas: And writing all of her various kin. Which is still there today. The secretary is still in the dining room today. And my grandmother had a beautiful hand, a beautiful hand. And my grandfather could also write. And so I just said, maybe there's something for me to find out. So I used to hang around my grandmother because everybody in the house was a man besides the girls were younger, much younger than me.

Q: When was this that you were with your grandmother? How big were you?

Thomas: In nineteen forty, about 1944, 43.

Q: You were a little one.

Thomas: Yeah. Well, see my mother used to work in the cafeteria of the board of education. And she used to take us down there and leave me with my grandmother so she could work. And that's how I got to know my grandmother. Grandma was also the superintendent of St. Paul's Baptist Church. So grandma had terrific memory, and grandma used to teach me to memorize.

How I got into this was Sunday School convention. Grandma Eccles would take somebody. So it was much easier to take your granddaughter than to take somebody who lived five miles away from you.

Q: I see.

Thomas: So, therefore, she used to teach me how to memorize things.

Q: At an early age.

Thomas: At a very early age. And how to read. You see folks, no one would recognize that we learned to read very early because we were in Sunday School. And when we were in Sunday School we had to read those ABC Cook Cards. And so I learned that very early. So I used to go to the conventions, and I had to repeat, memorize different kinds of things. And I used to always want to bring the banner home. I used to always want to bring that banner home. And I did.

Q: Right. And for what did you bring it home?

Thomas: What?

Q: In what area of competition. In memorization?

Thomas: Yes.

Q: In something that you recited?

Thomas: Yes. You always had to recite a Bible verse, or they used to ask you a question and you had to answer it with a Bible verse. Those kinds of things. And I used to be scared to death, but I was gonna bring that banner home for my grandmother. And that's how we used to memorize

things. And recognize things and pay attention.

Q: I see.

Thomas: To different things. Because of my grandmother.

Q: And that was associated with the church.

Thomas: Yeah. Associated with the church.

Q: Has the church always been important in your life?

Thomas: To me, yes. Yes. I remember one time I was about seven. I told my grandmother that there was no Santa Claus. I know who Santa Claus was. It was her. I knew everything. But she set me down and asked me did I see Santa Claus. I told her no. She asked me did I see Jesus. I told her no. She asked me did I believe in Jesus. I told her yes. She asked me why didn't I believe in Santa Claus. It was no different. It was the love that's in your heart. As long as you love, there'll always be a Santa Claus. She said I never want you to say there isn't a Santa Claus. And today I still say there is a Santa Claus.

Q: That's very interesting.

Thomas: And that was the way grandma pitched it to me. It's in your heart.

Q: As if she is pointing out the spirit of it to you.

Thomas: Yes. And that was the way she taught me about it. And then I used to remember all grandma's little things clubs said. 4H, and another one your hands and your heart. And different things like that. I don't remember them all. But she used to talk about them. And we'd participate

in them. Every night we used to walk to town. There was about maybe ten of those who walked to town with grandma. Either on the road or on the railroad tracks. Go with her. And that's how I got interested in the church.

Q: And this was all in Virginia.

Thomas: All in Virginia. Not here. All in Virginia. And I thought it was great.

Q: You mentioned your mother working, and what about your father's work?

Thomas: My father was a long shoreman.

Q: I see.

Thomas: Now, dad I never saw. Dad I never saw. I heard him some nights taking change out of his pockets, putting it on his dresser. But I never saw Dad until Saturday and Sunday. Cause Daddy worked all the time.

Q: I see.

Thomas: Mama cooked all the time. Now Mama didn't know anything to cook but Italian food. And she, cause when she cooked for the board of ed, she was cooking Italian. She knew lasagna and the meatballs, the breads, everything.

Q: I see.

Thomas: She knew how to do that. She used to cook at Ivy Haven and then she went to Wickwake and then she went to Shabazz. But she cooked Italian. And cooked like at home. That was the funniest thing to me. Because the kids in school were Italian.

Q: I see. So she had the two areas of cooking.

Thomas: Yeah. My mother could cook.

Q: Excuse me.

Thomas: My mother can cook. There's no question about that. I remember Carl Shiroot came to me one time, and said he had to hurry to Shabazz to eat. Cause the lady there was fixing him a salad every day. And what does this lady look like, and he began to tell me what she looked like, and I laughed. Oh I said, that's my mother. And he said, my goodness. I've been eating that lady's food since I was a kid at Wickwake. I didn't know that was your mother. I said, oh yes, she is a good cook. She worked for the board for thirty-three years.

Q: In the cafeteria?

Thomas: Yes. So the church was so close to me. I was baptized in Zion Hill Baptist Church on Hickerson Street when I was fifteen. The Reverend Stanford had just joined Zion Baptist Church. Reverend Porter was pastor before that.

Q: I see.

Thomas: And that was when I was baptized.

Q: Are you still associated with Zion Baptist?

Thomas: Yes I am. Yes I am. I don't go as much as I should.

Q: They have moved since that time.

Thomas: Sure.

Q: Does it still have the same pastor?

Thomas: Reverend Stanford, yes. But I don't believe in changing churches. I'm not that type to go from one church --

Q: Bouncing around.

Thomas: -- to another church. No, I don't do that. But every pastor in Newark think I'm a member of the church cause they often see me in the church. They don't know if I'm a member or not. I remember Reverend Sharper used to always say that I was a member of Abyssinian because he used to see me sit in Abyssinian a lot. But I was never a member of Abyssinian.

Q: You were attending church.

Thomas: I was just attending church. That was all. But let me tell you about Krueger Mansion, how I come to know it so well. There was a man across the street from me who cooked for Krueger Mansion. His name was Otto. That's all I knew about him was Otto. And he used to tell everybody that's my girl. I gotta save something for her. Come from school. So I used to come from Morton Street School and used to come past the back door of Krueger's looking for Otto. Cause he'd have all the nice cakes, and donuts and things, and he'd say I saved these for you. He'd say, that's my girlfriend. She lives across the street from me. That's how I became interested in Krueger. Otto. He used to save me cookies and things.

Q: And that was during your school days?

Thomas: That was during school days. Right at the back part of Krueger Mansion where they had that big kitchen. They used to have some roses and grapes back there. And it was always a

privilege for me cause he let me come back there and get some of them grapes.

Q: I see.

Thomas: So I became very much aware of Krueger because of Otto. And Otto would be back there, he'd be drunk or sober. Whatever one Otto would be, he'd be cooking. He'd be cooking.

Q: That was his thing.

Thomas: That was his place. Yes. I became interested in it, and was able to see the building. And he would tell me be quiet. Don't make any noise. I take you through the building so you can see the building. This is where I work. So I got to know that building because of Otto. I think his last name was Ropemore.

Q: You have a real connection that not many of our participants would have. I'm going to ask you to go back a bit because you did mention school when you started talking about Mr. Otto, and so will you tell us about your schooling? When you started and where you started.

Thomas: Oh. At first I started at Cole's Place School.

Q: I remember that.

Thomas: That was a little bitty school. Used to be a little street in between Court and Baldwin Streets.

Q: That's right.

Thomas: Apartment building is there now. But can you believe I almost knew every teacher that I had at Cole's Place School.

Q: Yes. I can believe that.

Thomas: My first grade teacher was Miss Young. Was named Miss Young. My second grade teacher was named Miss Spector.

Q: What was that?

Thomas: Nancy Spector.

Q: Spector.

Thomas: Yeah. My third grade teacher was named Miss Colby. And my fourth grade teacher was Miss Jefferson. Now, they was always telling me, the older kids in school, Jefferson wasn't her name. It was Yokovitch. I never knew what it was, but we used to call Miss Jefferson. And she had some pretty legs, and she'd stand up on the chairs and all the boys would say, look at them pretty legs.

Q: At a raw, young age, your classmates.

Thomas: Yes. Yes. Miss Jefferson was very stern. Miss Jefferson never treated us any different than she treated everybody else. She had a little stick on her desk called the little teacher, and that was a teacher too. And none of us wanted to mix with her little teacher. And there was only one fellow in school that would do something deliberately to go to her desk. He loved Miss Jefferson. That was Jake Scutter, and he used to be a bartender down Shotsma's nightclub. He was the only one that would do something to go to her desk. Nobody else would do anything to go to her desk.

Q: And he would be punished, would he?

Thomas: Yes. He liked to be punished. And he would say, oh Miss Jefferson didn't hit me hard.

Miss Jefferson didn't hit me hard. But I tell you, I met her again, when I went to school at night to take Spanish, she was in my same classroom learning Spanish herself.

Q: Can you imagine that?

Thomas: Yes. Then I went to Morton Street. I went to Morton Street. That's when the teachers lived in the neighborhood. My teacher was named Miss Springer, and when she got married, her name became Mrs. Harris. She lived on High Street in the apartment building there. And I had her twice as Miss Springer and Mrs. Harris. And that was the first time that classes used to change. Then I had a teacher who had the most beautiful handwriting I've ever seen, Miss Bragg. She could write.

Q: That impressed you.

Thomas: Yes. Her handwriting. And then there was Mr. Fang. His brother-in-law had a paper store on Court Street. Right next to where the old opera house used to be, and across the street where the First Precinct and next to it was Griffith pianos. His family owned a business right in there. He was one of my teachers. And then I had Miss Lafrange. Now she was fancy. She wore the pretty handkerchiefs out of her pocket, lace. And she smelled her perfume all the time. And I liked that because that was the first time I was changing classes. And I liked that. It was an English teacher I had there at Robert Treet was Miss [cross talk]

Q: Now you're mentioning Robert Treet. How long were you in Morton?

Thomas: Well, Morton Street was like say the seventh grade. And during that time I was going to school, they was busy changing schools. Changing districts. Every year you went to a different school because they were changing districts.

Q: I know what you mean. It had to do with the Graves Plan.

Thomas: So they was changing all the time. So, therefore, I was being shifted each year. So when I went to Robert Treet it was for seventh, eighth and ninth grades. I skipped the eighth grade at Robert Treet. But I guess you can't guess who was in my class. Charles Motts, the police director, was sitting behind me. Ed Levy, the other police director, sat in the front of me.

Q: Imagine.

Thomas: Yeah.

Q: They were your fellow students.

Thomas: Fellow students. Andrew Mullins who played basketball for Central All Star was in my class. It was something. My class was something.

Q: I see.

Thomas: And we had a good time. We really had a good time. I still in all that time never forgot how to steal grapes. Cause I'd come home and bring my mother flowers.

Q: Yes.

Thomas: From behind Krueger. I knew how to get there. Knew how to get behind. And I loved that building. You have never been in it, have you?

Q: Yes. Yes I have.

Thomas: When you was a little kid.

Q: I never was in it when it was in great use. No, I never saw it active with a program or great

events.

Thomas: Well, they got the little kids faces in it too, you know, and those quotes going up. See those little kids faces used to be in there. I thought it was cute. Cause I thought maybe it was just the Krueger kids cause all these little faces like imprints. Beautiful place. Beautiful place. Marble fireplaces.

Q: We'll see how much they have been able to restore or.

Thomas: Last time I was in the building, some of the marble fireplaces had been stolen.

Q: Yes. That happened so many places in Newark.

Thomas: Yes. Had been stolen. And then a couple of them had been painted over.

Q: Isn't that awful.

Thomas: And I said, my goodness, how did they paint this black over this marble. And I went in there with Judge Bucks. We walked through the building to see if I could remember what was in the building. And we were looking at it because we really had considered it as a guest house. See when we have friends who come to Newark from different places, you know, Africa, so forth, we put them up in the hotel.

Q: Yes.

Thomas: And we said this building's so beautiful, why not have it as a guest house. You know, we have people come from.

Q: It's a lovely idea.

Thomas: Africa and so forth. Especially the second floor, North part of that second floor. You look right out on Court Street. Cause that was one room, suite of rooms, they was like together. And why couldn't we have it as a guest house. They could stay there, and the rest of the building be turned into like a money making activity. So that's the way we saw it.

Q: That's an interesting idea certainly.

Thomas: That's the way we saw it. Because Mrs. Scott had a book, room for a bookshop there. A nursery and a few other things. You know, various others. But there was a bedroom there, and that was where she stayed. That we wanted to see it turned into a suite of rooms. And we were thinking of that. We actually were thinking of that for that particular building.

Q: Of course, it came very close to not being saved at all.

Thomas: I know. I know. And when they asked about it I told them that the people who saved this building was the winos. Never forget it. Because if they didn't love it, it would have been gone. It would have been gone.

Q: Is that true?

Thomas: Yes. Because one day we saw them actually stop a person coming out of there with them marble doorknobs. And the winos didn't want that. What are they going to take marble doorknobs to. They loved that building. In fact, all the signatures that I got for the building, it was the winos who got it.

Q: Is that true?

Thomas: Yes. It was those winos who got it. And they used to say to me, Mrs. Thomas what do you want to say about you and that building? As I said, see that fat lady over there. That's who

saved it; that's all. And I watched it all the time. I go past there every day, I watch it.

Q: Coming along.

Thomas: You see the people want that building. You know, it takes something else we did. I went on WNJR and asked the people [phone ringing] about Krueger Mansion. Man at WNJR said that he's never seen, the board has never lit up like it did that day. People called about Krueger Mansion, and people were willing to donate pictures to Krueger Mansion. They were excited. And I just talked about Krueger Mansion, and people seemed to just love it. Especially the senior citizens across from it in [phone ringing]. They loved it. They loved it., They was ready the next day to get things out and write names on them and give them up, and they still are. See because Newark, I got to visit other towns, Newarkers don't have anything for its people. And I really wanted to say, but I've talked about Krueger Mansion. Is I wanted to say a person could take their pictures to and say here.

Q: Show that they were here, and they were something to remember.

Thomas: Yeah. Because if you don't see yourself, nobody else will. And there's nothing in Newark that says you were ever here. Nothing that says you were ever here. All we know is we live and we die. And nobody talks about our contributions. You know, and I'm going to take this liberty right now to talk about children.

Q: Don't use this time, but.

Thomas: I remember when we were sitting down in my living room, myself, Jim Still, Mary Smith and Esther Williams and I said we don't have. And we just sat there talking about what we don't have. And before I knew it the next day we were on our way down to Adenizio's office. It was you did not know. We didn't know. We're sitting in his office and told him we want a curriculum specialist. He said, who. And we told him, and he said you ladies know. And we said

no. He says, then what you all doing here. Say, I don't know. We come to use our time. He looked at me, he looked at Him, he looked at Esther. Because we were the four people in there. He said, okay. I have to call the lady up because she may not want it. And we said, if she comes in say, yes she do too. That's how bold somebody was. Well, it got so good, we started in Dr. Vances. All we were making was a couple sets of rooms then. I tell you it was getting good. But you know what, he said, yes to everybody in there.

Q: That was the time when the Afro-American population was really becoming quite vocal and informed about how things operated in the city I imagine.

Thomas: Yes. And he [phone ringing] said, well nobody from my administration said anything to me. Well, I couldn't answer that. That wasn't my business. We just was in our house talking and came out with a list. And we said we're gonna take it down there. It surprised that he said yes. And we stood there and danced. And left there disappointed. And left there disappointed.

Q: You've been in some interesting times.

Thomas: Oh yeah. Yeah. Yeah.

Q: You know what you haven't told me about because we came through your childhood and elementary school days, and you told about some of the folks that were in junior high with you, but I haven't heard about your high school days and getting into raising your own family.

Thomas: Well, you know what? High school was strange. Cause that was the first time I had been with all caucasians.

Q: Where did you go?

Thomas: Arts High.

Q: What was your speciality?

Thomas: Arts major. All caucasians. So that was the first time I saw children in a wheelchair was at Arts High. But one thing that remains with me today is the New York Times. Cause while I was at Arts High School, the New York Times used to be on the front desk. And you'd go pick up one and read it. And I used to wonder, oh why are kids picking up the New York Times and reading it. I didn't know. So I used to put my dime up there, and pick it up too. And learn to fold it like they fold it, and read it.

END SIDE ONE, TAPE ONE; BEGIN SIDE TWO, TAPE ONE

Q: Read the New York Times at Arts High School.

Thomas: Yes. This is how I became acquainted with the New York Times. I was also very dumb in some other areas. I didn't know that during that time that I was reading Times from front and back that I was pregnant with my daughter. I was sixteen. I didn't know the difference. I'd go on to school. In fact, this year is the exact date my daughter was born, thirty-nine years ago.

Q: Is that true?

Thomas: Yes. So school started on the ninth that year, and Elizabeth was born on the twelfth. So I didn't know what was going on. So trouble on Thursday, and I was walking home from Arts High School, and my water broke. And I said, what in the world is this? I know I'm not having a problem with myself cause it was strange. It was really strange to me.

Q: This was a total surprise?

Thomas: Total surprise. I come on home, and did my homework, and got the rest of my work done. I was sitting at the table, eating and I told my father, I said, I don't feel good. I said, can

you take me to the doctor cause I don't really feel good. So he said, you want to go? And my mother said, oh she's trying to get out of doing the dishes. I said, no'. No, I'm not. So my father took me to the doctor. Dr. Farmer, he was a West Indian, up here on Court Street. After Dr. Farmer examined me, he said that to my father, come in Mr. Ray, I got to tell you something. And he said, you sit down here. So I sat down. He said, Miss Ray, and I said, yes sir. He said, you're gonna have a baby. I said what did you say. And my father froze. My father actually froze in his seat. He said, well, let me go get your mother. That's all he said. He was like a board. He went home and got my mother and went to the hospital. Well, hon, that was the worst thing in the world. Cause my mother talked for the whole time, from the minute she got in that car until I got in the hospital, Clara talked. And all I could say was I wish she would just shut up and give me some peace. Cause I didn't know what was going on in the world. It was a shock. I didn't know what was going on in the world. And then she said, then she dropped the bomb. Well, you better find some place to stay cause you ain't staying here. You ain't got no place to stay. It's too small for you and the baby too. So you're gonna have to decide which one is which. I couldn't decide nothing. I didn't know a thing. I was dumb as a door nail. When I say I was dumb as a door nail, I was dumb as a door nail. Well, I'm taken to the hospital and I got an infection because I didn't have any medical treatment. So I had to stay in the hospital.

So what happened was my mother came up and got the baby and left me. Now I didn't know why I was being left. Baby was going to my mom's and I'm being left. So I didn't ask my mother anything. I didn't want to hear Mama ask for nothing. So I asked my father what was going to happen to me. He said, as soon as you get well you come home and you're going to school. [phone ringing]. If you want to go, that's up to you, but you're going to school. And I didn't say nothing. I was so happy to hear that I was going to school, I didn't know what to do. So a week later, my father come up and got me to go home. And I was back to school. Just as good as I could be. And my mother, she was giving me hell twenty-four hours a day. In fact, there's the little girl right over there. You see right there. That's my daughter; that's my son. The same picture.

Q: How much younger is he than she is?

Thomas: About three years.

Q: I see.

Thomas: She's the oldest. That's my grandson right there, my oldest grandson. And that's my baby grandson up top.

Q: To whom do these belong? Each of these photographs, to which of your children do the grandchildren belong?

Thomas: The boy.

Q: The boy belongs to the boy?

Thomas: Yeah.

Q: Or they all belong to the boy? They all belong to your son?

Thomas: Yeah. Right there.

Q: I see.

Thomas: And so I didn't know how to get out of that one. And for a man who didn't say much, my father took a position.

Q: How did you feel about that?

Thomas: Oh let me tell you. I was so glad he spoke up, I didn't know what to say. Especially when he said I could go back to school. And that's where all my experiences came in. Because

then I got my old place. With my father's help, I got my own place. I lived next door to Irving Turner. And I used to bring that little boy downstairs and let him play. And while being downstairs, that's how I met Irving Turner. He said, who is that little man, who's little man is that? I said, that's my son. He said, well, if you hear my phone ring, answer my phone for me. I said, sure. Oh, you know, I had me a good time answering his phone. And learning. Because at that time there was the City Commission. And so he was head of the Welfare Department. So everybody who came in there for welfare, I used to take their name and number. Tell them where to go.

Q: And as a black, he was in a unique position would you say?

Thomas: Yes.

Q: Tell us about that. What was unique about it?

Thomas: Well, number one, he was the only black. Was the only black. And he was head of the welfare. And one of the things he did was he taught me about voter registration. I remember one day I had a whole list of people who had come in and who needed help. And I was just busy reading names off and telling him. And he looked at me, he said, Edna. I said, yes sir. Are they registered to vote? And I said, I don't know. He said, you didn't ask? I said, no. Is it important? He said, they didn't vote for me before I give them some money, you know they ain't gonna vote for me after I give them some money. You get every one of those folks registered then I'll see. I said Lord have mercy But you know what? When I called the people back on the telephone, they all came.

Q: Is that true?

Thomas: And they registered to vote. All I did was tell them Irving Turner said you better register or you ain't gonna get no welfare checks, and they registered. And when I showed that I

got all these folks registered, he said, what kind of persuasion did you use? I said, the check. And he laughed. He told me, he said, Edna, from now on, carry voter registration cards in your pocketbook. And whenever you see black person, make them register to vote. It's very important that they participate in their life. And I never forgot that.

And he used to, every summer, he used to take a trip to Washington, D.C. He used to take the Boys Club on the trip. And I used to go and take my kids too. That's how I saw President Kennedy's grave. Medger Evers grave, that's our participating. And Adam Clayton Powell, I never forget. He was at a meeting and he said we need some folks to help Adam, my friend Adam. We want to put a second black man in Congress. And I volunteered. And we went over to New York and knocked on those doors. Getting the folks ready for Adam Clayton Powell. I'll never forget. And whooo was he a handsome man. Oh, was he handsome. Percy Sutton, David Dinkins, I met all them people at that age.

Q: There were all active in your young days.

Thomas: In my young days. And I didn't see Mr. Sutton again until, let me see, Donald Tucker was running for office. And I called Mr. Sutton on the phone and told him my name. And he said, oh, this must be that lady with the red birthmark. I was shocked. How could he remember me? But he did. And he said, yeah, tell Don Tucker I'll come. I never got over that. I never got over it. But I met all those people during that time, who gave me inspiration to continue to do what I was doing.

Q: In public activity.

Thomas: In public activity and so forth. Just that encouragement. And talk about Percy Sutton being handsome. Oh, let me tell you something. I come home telling my mother, he was one of the most handsome black man I've ever seen in my life, Percy Sutton and Adam Clayton Powell.

Q: Two of them.

Thomas: And David Dinkins. But it was what I needed to keep on. Because you see that money was not important to me. Clothes was not important to me. Just me being there was important. And then, the thing that was the craziest thing, was Adam Clayton Powell. I meant to say not Adam Clayton Powell, Irving Turner running for office again. There was one year when they didn't like Irving. And they spread all kinds of nasty. God. I never understand why people do that.

Q: Do you recall how long he served?

Thomas: I don't remember. He had to serve for at least six years. I do know that the last time I saw him, Ken Gibson had him handing out towels at JFK Pool. And that hurt me. Cause you see I didn't think he had to hand out towels.

Q: Oh you mean as an attendant?

Thomas: Yes, as an attendant. See, I always thought that for me being around those politicals and learning who was who and who was who. That I thought that they should have been treated like the white ones were treated. The whites used to drive their cars and go back and forth. I didn't see them hand out no towels.. I didn't think Irving should have been treated that way. He'd stood at the JFK Pool and he'd hand out those towels. And it used to hurt me every time I see it, because I read in the paper about Mickey Bonsheckel, ain't nobody gave him no towels to hand out. And Irving had a stroke. See I just thought that for what Irving had given people and given this community, he should have been treated differently than he was. And that's why I wanted Krueger Mansion.

Q: That is really strange because generally I've observed that once somebody has been up in the political sphere, somehow life is facilitated with jobs and stuff to have them carry on, perhaps unobtrusively, but in something of a manner appropriate with what they've been.

Thomas: Yes. And I didn't see that happen with Irving.

Q: I didn't know how he, you know, continued after going out of office. So you are certainly providing a new insight here.

Thomas: Yeah. He was handing out towels. And you know what, the part I was glad about. The kids really didn't know who he was.

Q: Which means?

Thomas: I was almost glad they didn't know who he was.

Q: But you would agree that later that was something that they should know because it was significant. He was significant in the history.

Thomas: Yes. Yes.

Q: So you're going to do your bit to see that he has his place.

Thomas: Yes. When we were trying to get the, down here on Clinton Avenue and Irving Turner Blvd. there was a monument there. I think it's just, it's there now. Of him and Reverend Hayes and somebody else, all names right there on a plaque there.

Q: That's what you wanted to accomplish.

Thomas: Yes. See we have forgotten who helped us get through.

Q: I pass that little triangle, but I don't know what's in it.

Thomas: Yeah. We have forgotten who helped us get through. Like I tell the minister from Bethany Baptist Church, every time I see him, why did you let Reverend Hayes just pass away. His contribution to Newark just passed away. I said that project up on that hill is Hayes Hall. That's Reverend Hayes.

Q: What are your memories of him?

Thomas: Reverend Hayes?

Q: Yes.

Thomas: I took buttermilk to his uncle every day. His uncle lived in Virginia, up the railroad from my grandmother. And I used to take buttermilk to him every morning. He liked fresh buttermilk. And so I used to put it in a cart and I'd run up the road taking his buttermilk and bring the other bottle back. And nobody knew that I, Reverend Hayes, I told him one day. Reverend Hayes in the church was just like his uncle.

Q: Is that true?

Thomas: And his aunt who raised him lived down there for Virginia. In a trailer for years. My uncle took care of her.

Q: Did he ever visit down there when you were down there?

Thomas: Very rare. Very rare. But I said, you shouldn't let him go like that. You all shouldn't let him go. Now they're getting ready to tear the building down. So what they have?

Q: Excuse me.

Thomas: They're getting ready to tear that building down. So what do they have? Nothing that talks about Reverend Hayes. See those are the things. See, this is why I keep telling folks, you all have to be vigilant with Krueger because that's the only place we have for our people. The library's not doing it.

Q: But within the ownership of the library, and the woman who has to direct it, I'm working with her. Her office is in the City Hall. And she is supervising the work that's going on. And she's always doing something to raise funds. So this project is a part of her program and is going to be in that house. You know, when it's ready.

Thomas: Yes. Do you understand what I'm saying? Is I look at Reverend Hayes and they're getting ready to tear that building down. So his name be gone from there. You go down Clinton Avenue there's two, they may change that name. You know something else. You know, blacks have not evaporated out of Newark. They act like we have, but we haven't. I've been on Krueger Mansion now for close to twelve years. I think I'm the longest board member there. They laugh at me that I stick with it. Yeah I stuck with it.

Q: What is the name of your board?

Thomas: Symphony Hall, Inc.

Q: Oh the board of Symphony Hall. Now, are you drawing an association between Symphony Hall and Krueger Mansion?

Thomas: Yes. We always thought about especially when [?] was around. Krueger Mansion as being a small part of Symphony Hall. Because they have a smaller theater. We sit about three hundred people. So it would be nice to have smaller things in that part of the building. While having a reception in the front. There are a whole lot of different things we could do. We could tie it in [phone ringing] because if you look at Newark, Lincoln Park, you can see that circle going

around. You can see that circle. And it would be easy to bring it together. Do one of those old key clubs that was downtown. Symphony Hall. They want to give us Symphony Hall anyway. So we might as well take it and do it up. You know what I mean? And that's the way I look at it.

Q: It's a wonderful place.

Thomas: Yes it is.

Q: It's a wonderful place.

Thomas: Yes it is. You know, my clients here clean that place. From top to the second sub-basement.

Q: When they got ready to refurbish it?

Thomas: Yes.

Q: I see.

Thomas: And all these because I love that place so. And I just want us to reach somebody.

Q: Certainly should be preserved.

Thomas: And it should be preserved.

Q: And used.

Thomas: That's right. And so that's what I like about it. We could do so many things in the theater. You know, we have so many people here who love the arts. And we're not using. Carol

Whitley was on the board of ed.

Q: Yes.

Thomas: Her brother does stained glass.

Q: He what?

Thomas: Stained glass.

Q: Oh.

Thomas: And he said he would teach the kids here in Newark stained glass. To do all the windows in Krueger Mansion. There's been a lot of people who want to give their time to Krueger Mansion. Miss Belton, the janitorial service, her and Mrs. Kemp pledged on the radio that whenever they were called to do some work, they would do it for Krueger Mansion. Now I don't know what happened and then they stopped. I know she passed and Renee Starks passed. But she was supposed to leave something to Krueger Mansion. I guess that's gone now. Cause she had no kids, but she did have a husband. To Krueger Mansion. Renee Starks was gonna do a room in Krueger Mansion. She had pledged that on the radio. There's quite a few people. We had also lined up the black clubs and organizations.

Q: The organizations.

Thomas: All we wanted them to do is to meet in Krueger Mansion. And they got these little pledges they can get all around the city. Twenty-five dollars here they pay. They didn't want them to do that any more. We wanted them to come in on the regular calendar and meet at Krueger Mansion. So therefore when they have something large, they could be here in Symphony Hall. When they had something small, they could be in Krueger Mansion.

Q: For a time the organizations that you're speaking of used Alumni House [cross talk].

Thomas: Yes.

Q: But that didn't last. Did you have any association with that?

Thomas: Alumni House, just across the street.

Q: Yes.

Thomas: Yeah, used to. I worked and helped the Boys Club, the art center used the place for a while until they got their own place. And they went to Lincoln Park. But you know what happened, is white folks get rich quick. Then when white folks get rich quick, they stop using black facilities. And all of a sudden it's no good. But that hall has that beautiful floors there, beautiful floors. And they didn't take care of the house. Used to take care of that building, and it's a beautiful place. So I don't know what the church is going to do with it now, because pre-school is still in that thing. And they keep have meetings over there. But sometimes take a look at that building. That building and the one next to it where Dr. Carr.

Q: Dr. Carr's building.

Thomas: Yes. Yes. Used to live. Now that's a gorgeous house. Dr. Carr's house was a gorgeous house. I've been in that one too. I used to live across the street from there on.

Q: Right. When you were in there with Mr. Turner.

Thomas: And Dr. Carr must have had about four or five big dogs. And he used to feed them corn flakes. Why I say he used to feed them corn flakes cause I used to see him come from down the street from that store that's where he bought stuff at with a shopping cart full of corn flakes and

milk.

Q: There you've just mentioned somebody else who's gone from our scene. Dr. Carr.

Thomas: J. C. Carr. Yes. A beautiful place.

Q: What can you tell us about him?

Thomas: Dr. Carr was very serious. Only thing I can say about Dr. Carr, I believe, was he used to wave when he came out. That was all he did, and say hi. And he'd get in his car and go about his business. That was J.C. Carr.

Q: Was his practice conducted right there?

Thomas: Well, we used to always wonder. Cause at night we used to sit outside, we'd see lights go on up on his top floor. And we used to wonder what was going on up there. Because that was the only place lights were at at night was on the top floor. But later on, the next day, he'd still get in his car. Very stylish, very stylish. Leather gloves, everything. And go ahead, wherever he was going. But he has some mean dogs.

Q: And you said it was a beautiful house so I guess the dogs were.

Thomas: Well, we used to stand in front of the house, and look like through the center of the house. You could see the prisms in the glass.

Q: Yes.

Thomas: The stained glass. Now whose house it was then was Dr. Herring. 614. Next door. Yeah, that's a beautiful house. I was in that one cause he was my doctor. So I was in that one.

Q: I see. So you are aware of a number of distinguished buildings.

Thomas: Dr. Silks' house. It was an apartment building and his son's small house and there's the store.

Q: True:

Thomas: There was a small house back there that belonged to Dr. Silks.

Q: I know where you mean.

Thomas: I used to buy hats all the time. And then you going down Court Street, you got the Daycoat on one side. When Dr. Silks' old house, it was Dr. Sanders. Dr. Sanders used to [?] Irving Turner. That's where he originally was on the corner of Wharton and High Streets. Dr. Sanders. There's a lot of history in that block. And next door to the Krueger Mansion was a brother Griffith, piano player.

Q: The last building that was removed there are you speaking of?

Thomas: No.

Q: On the High Street side?

Thomas: Yeah on the front side of High Street. I think it's Mr. DeAngeli, there was another DeAngeli. Big one. I think it was Larry Staks' building. Next to Krueger, College Place, Larry Starks building. Now I think they're going to tear down Larry Starks' building.

Q: I hadn't heard that.

Thomas: I heard it.

Q: Seems to have had a lot of problems, and there's been different ownership and different management.

Thomas: Well, there's some thinking of turning that area over that lower. Buildings a little lower. That's what I heard.

Q: That's a big building.

Thomas: Well, King Street is still the same. That corner on the other side of King Street. It's still the same. And the Y is still there on King Street. Wells Cathedral is still there. So there's some thinking about turning in that big old. So I don't know how true that is, but that's the rumor.

Q: Well, there's certainly a lot of history.

Thomas: St. James wants to buy it.

Q: St. James is planning a school.

Thomas: Behind the church.

Q: Right behind the church.

Thomas: Yes. They haven't got the money yet.

Q: Yes. I heard about theirs first. But so far as I have seen, nothing is happening.

Thomas: Well, the last time I was in Reverend Scott's church, this was about two months ago,

they told me they were working on it. They just have wish they had the money.

Q: Takes a lot of money.

Thomas: So I don't know. I know his wife said that she wanted him to retire. Yeah, she kept telling me that, she wants him to retire. It takes a lot of money to do that. But see, High Street has a very rich history.

END SIDE TWO, TAPE ONE; BEGIN SIDE ONE, TAPE TWO

Q: Mrs. Thomas, you were telling us about many interesting persons and buildings along High Street or near High Street. So that you certainly have a very rich background and we would want as much as possible to be recorded for future generations. Is there anything else you want to tell us about families nearby?

Thomas: Well, the Renee Starks property, the Charles Williams property on Martin Luther King. They tried to steal it from them about thirty years ago.

Q: Who?

Thomas: The Housing Authority. The Mandelbaum Associates went to buy it. I went and knocked on the doors to tell them who was going to sell it. They were going to take their property. So I told them don't say anything, come to a meeting tomorrow, and wear old clothes and just don't say anything. So they came. And they sat there at the Housing Authority right with me and listened to what was planned for their house. And they were utterly shocked. And they did not sell their property. Charles Williams, he was highly upset because he thought that he was going to get the money from that property to finish his [?] home, and what happened is he did. And that was the first time he knew that he wasn't going to get it. And next to it is the Schapiro House on Shelton Place. And that's been left there a long time. And they said they should sell. Now that's

been in that family a long time. Beautiful home. And they're obsessed and I keep saying it. That we have never taken the time to tie that together. You see, it should be a district. Not Krueger Mansion. It should be a district. And all of them belong in this district. All of them. So I figure that once Krueger Mansion gets started and put in its proper place, then I think the rest of them are going to fall into line. I really believe that.

Q: Well I'm glad to hear you say it.

Thomas: Have you seen that driveway that Krueger Mansion has? All those houses add something to that district.

Q: That's true. That's true.

Thomas: That where Hill Manor is now, that building will come down. And a smaller building needs to be put up that will enhance Krueger Mansion. You see, there used to be smaller buildings there, small buildings. It's not there anymore. And the hospital used to be on that corner.

Q: That corner was Beth Israel.

Thomas: Clara Med.

Q: West Kinney and High Street was Beth Israel. Clara Med where my son had his tonsils out when he was a little fellow was over there on Twelfth Avenue, round about, that street where Berna Henry used to live on. Twelfth Avenue and Wallace.

Thomas: I may be wrong. But I don't know why I keep saying Clara Med. Because it was turned into the Daughters of Israel.

Q: Home for the aged.

Thomas: Home for the aged. When I was a little girl, it was turned into that.

Q: You might be thinking across the street, which you have not mentioned, the building of the Kenney Hospital is still there. And presently our landmark commission is working on getting it preserved. We hope that it will.

Thomas: Where Kinney Street is, where the church is.

Q: There's a church in it right now.

Thomas: Yes.

Q: Kenney Hospital.

Thomas: Starts with a T, there's a T. Starts with a T, the Reverend, doesn't it?

Q: Who, the person in charge of the church?

Thomas: Yeah.

Q: I don't know.

Thomas: Yeah, I think it start with a T. The family is there all the time. The church has been there a long time. It's been the same family that's been. Tufts I think it was at one time. I'm not sure.

Q: I see.

Thomas: My mother used to belong to Downtown Association. We used to go down to Tennessee Court.

Q: But as a hospital, it had significance in the black community.

Thomas: Yes. Well, Dr. Darden was in there. He was across the street. The place is down now.

Q: Yes.

Thomas: It was torn down. That was my family doctor.

Q: He was? Dr. Darden?

Thomas: Dr. Darden. But his other office was on the corner of High Street.

Q: On High Street. Yes.

Thomas: Well that was.

Q: Still standing.

Thomas: Yes. Well, you go all the way down there, that red and white apartment building, that's owned by this Jessies too. You know the Jessie family?

Q: I know the name.

Thomas: They were teachers. They came from New York.

Q: Yes. Yes.

Thomas: That's his first cousin.

Q: Right. He was a Newark student. I saw something not so long ago about his days as a student in Newark.

Thomas: Yeah, well that red and white building is his cousin.

Q: I see.

Thomas: And down on Washington Street, you know near Spruce Street all those buildings look alike, the brown.

Q: Yes. Yes.

Thomas: That's his buildings too. They're all, see all of that is being tied up together. Go down Kinney Street behind the Y, there are two little nice houses. They're owned by Jessie too.

Q: Is that true?

Thomas: Yes.

Q: And there are family members scattered all around.

Thomas: That's why I said that if Krueger Mansion ever moves, and I know it will move.

Q: You mean to be a success.

Thomas: Yes. Then everybody else will fall in line. You watch it. Cause they're holding on to their property. They're not selling it. They're holding on to their property.

Q: Well, a lot of us would be happy to see that.

Thomas: I know I would. You ever look at Longwood Street?

Q: Yes.

Thomas: A lot of nice houses right in there. You don't think so, but it is. And they're holding on to their property. They're holding on. They're just waiting for Krueger Mansion, that's all. Because how Krueger goes so goes the rest of that neighborhood.

Q: I see. You know what I'd like you to do for us now. Sort of give us an overview of the changes you have seen in Newark over your years, and if you like, you could start from when your parents came to Newark and on to what you see for the future of Newark.

Thomas: I've never thought about what I liked or what I didn't like.

Q: Please, by all means, tell both. But tell the changes from the past up until what you would foresee.

Thomas: What I thought about looking at Newark.

Q: Go ahead.

Thomas: I saw a lot of buildings that torn down. That didn't have to be torn down. They were beautifully done. Looking at Court Street, in between Washington and High Streets, even where St. James want to build their school. Beautiful buildings were in there, and they got torn down. I

didn't think they should be torn down. A lot of them had beautiful flowers in front. I will never forget those because I walked past them every day going to school. I didn't think they should have been torn down. I saw the precinct get torn down on the corner of Washington and Court Street. I didn't think it should be torn down. I really didn't. What happened to Newark, and let me explain it this way. They tore up the neighborhoods and never built them back. It's different than building houses than building neighborhoods. And they never built the neighborhoods. See I used to go past Court Street and see that land. The cop had this house, and he loved flowers. And you could just count, fifteen, twenty different flowers. And it made the whole neighborhood stand out. No more. No more. You go through all the streets, you see nothing but a Knickerbocker storage. I used to walk through there going to Zion Hill Baptist Church. It used to be a neighborhood. No more neighborhood because they.

Q: You're talking about neighborhoods.

Thomas: Neighborhoods. Take a look at civil rights. I remember when the Bishop and all of them moved from one part of the little street to the second part of the little street. And then save the money and go on High Street. They left no neighborhood here. They just looked to sell the rights. That's all. You don't see any cleaners, hair dressers. You see one block of shops. There's nothing to support the [phone ringing] life, family life here. And that's what hurts me. There's nothing to support family life.

Q: Now when you were raising your children, did you feel that the support institutions or services were nearby and convenient?

Thomas: No. Because I used to, what used to happen is every Friday I used to take my kids and put them in a cab and take them over to my mother's and leave them over there. And my father used to bring them back Sunday night so they could go to school. Cause they had nothing here. There was nothing around the projects for them to do. Not a thing. And my father would take them to the movies. He'd take them here; he'd take them there. There was nothing there. And so

my kids would have slipped down unless they were with my parents. The same thing during the riots of 67. That was one part that I guess I left out because it's very painful. Very painful for me, 67. I took my children over my mother's house and left them. And actually left them because that's what I wanted to do, where I wanted them to be. And that's where they could go outside and play and feel at peace. When my son woke up one morning in 1967 and drew a picture of a plane, and said, mommy, they're coming to get us. That hurt me so bad. I said, let me get my kids out of here before they get scarred for life. And I went downstairs and all the soldiers were outside. And I saw a long shoreman that worked with my father. And we called him big apple. I said, take my kids over my father. And he did. And tell my father I'll come and get them when things are safe. Thank God I did. Because I couldn't take it.

Q: That was a bad time.

Thomas: That was a bad time. I couldn't take it anymore. See I could stay there myself and lay on the floor, but I couldn't ask my kids for anything to do that. They had no father. There was nothing there for them. I don't know what the stores were protecting them for. There was nothing there for them to steal or take. But they didn't any homes. They just built a building, tall building. No community. You look around now. There is no community. They want to know why the kids use drugs. Anything the kids sell, they make money. In Newark there are three words, the kids say it first, then the dope. They're gonna make money. They're gonna do well. They don't have no family life. They come out and stand outside. Cuss the teachers, cuss their family. And you know what, they don't hate the teachers. It's just something to do. It's just something to do.

Q: That certainly places a great demand and challenge toward churches, schools and every kind of institution.

Thomas: Well, you see, if they had a place like Krueger Mansion ready where kids. I remember in the front there, I was talking to a young boy he was telling me a story about the on Court Street and how they robbed the bank and so forth. And looked at me and he said, go ahead, finish telling

that story. And I said, man's name was Holiday, and I had met him up there in the hospital and went to school with him. And he looked at me and he said, thank y'cu, Mrs. Thomas. I said, for what? He said, that's my daddy. He said, you all knew my daddy. And I just looked at him. He's been a lot better ever since. He don't want to move. And he told his mother, he said, mama there's this lady, she knows my father. And he asked me what he looked like and I told him. Yeah, that's him. Cause all the kids beat up on him. My mother gave me a gift when she left here. She said you're the only one in the family who treat me good. She gave me a huge Bible. The Bible's bigger than my head. [phone ringing] And I opened it up, and I never knew what was inside. And I didn't who it belonged to. Engraved inside in the Bible. I said, mama, who did this engraving. She said you don't want to know. A little history.

Q: Well, it's something to work on. Of course, I am further along than you are at this point. And I've begun to think about what do the children have and what will they value and will they pass things on and so on? And it's really something to think about.

Thomas: Yes. Yes. Yes.

Q: And I think perhaps I should have gathered more, but if I encourage them now maybe they will be more active.

Thomas: Kids think about. Guys want to tell. I know a lot about Newark. Krueger Mansion, a lot of different places. But sometimes, it doesn't come across my mind. You know, sometimes, like records. Nat King Cole. Lot of famous came here. Lot of things. Cause I was watching television the other night and saw Nat King Cole's daughter on Oprah.

Q: I think I saw that.

Thomas: And you know what, I got all the records. I've got all of them.

Q: You have hers or you have his? You have her father's records.

Thomas: All of them. There was something then. These kids don't have it. They don't have anything. Just like I ask them, do you know about the flag? And my daughter said, no. I said what you mean you don't know. Your mama told you that. They don't know. They don't know.

Q: Well how would they?

Thomas: That's right. Ain't nobody told, show them, no place for them to go.

Q: I imagine if you ask some youngsters now, they wouldn't know what you are were talking about if you said Kenneth Gibson. And it's not so long since he went out of the mayoral office after holding it for sixteen years. [phone ringing]

Thomas: I know. It's kind of pitiful. A lot that we're losing. We're losing.

Q: Well, don't you think that there has to be some kind of plan of exposure. Something to bring up the young so that they know what was before them. Who's going to do that?

Thomas: It's up to each one of us. Not just one person. It's up to each one of us to do it. That's what I have to begin. If you look at the [voice fades out]. He wouldn't give up. I tried to have him give up that day. He wouldn't give them up for the navy. He won't give them up now. Have you talked to Gene Thompson.

Q: Excuse me.

Thomas: Gene Thompson.

Q: No I haven't. I don't think I've ever spoken with him.

Thomas: His dad used to write for the Herald News.

Q: Right. And I met his father on a committee that I was on. [phone ringing] It was trying to do something in the area of black history.

Thomas: Well, he got a little part of stuff.

Q: I don't know. I don't know him you see.

Thomas: Oh, I do. He has a sponsor. I sat down and had lunch with him about two or three months ago. He had his father's touch. He promised me he was going to give them up one day.

Q: To whom will he give them? Has he got a plan?

Thomas: I don't know.

Q: That's something to think about.

Thomas: I don't think so. But I know he's got all his father's stuff.

Q: I see. So who would preserve them and make good use of them.

Thomas: And Bernice, she's going to give her stuff to nobody. You know, she don't have nobody either.

Q: Oh my. That could be tragic. Materials should not be lost.

Thomas: I don't know who she planned to give them to. But I know once her mother passed. Mrs. Gould should have a lot. Dorothy Gould should have a lot. She was a church woman for

years.

Q: Yes. They were staunch friends.

Thomas: I would see them about different things.

Q: Who's that?

Thomas: Dorothy Gould.

Q: Oh, I got Dorothy Gould. You said someone, Smith?

Thomas: Mary Smith. She has a lot. Of the New Community. She should have a lot of stuff. I know she should have. I have, interesting, I don't know what I got. And I do know what I got. I've got to go through it.

Q: And list it and look at your own list.

Thomas: Yeah. I got Joe Louis pictures down in Washington, D.C. They're my aunts pictures. Louis Armstrong and drinks in the Hollywood Club. Those are all the old timers.

Q: Yes.

Thomas: And I'd be glad to give them up. And I should go through my books.

Q: Well, when you've had a chance to go through them, perhaps we can get somebody from one or the other of the preservations organizations to receive and use them.

Thomas: I really think that's what we should be doing. I've been trying to get Carol, she worked

with me and made an outline. I didn't follow. But it mainly depended on who showed these things. And I will start in 1950. And the reason why I saw 1950 is that when Irving Turner was head of the welfare department. And I was going to ask people to call in and bring in their pictures and put them on the [?] in 1950.

Q: That sounds like a good activity.

Thomas: And I believe people will do it. Because on the old city map, you have some streets that are not there any more. Like Louis Street, right here.

Q: Yes.

Thomas: You see Augusta Street is over here. All those places. I believe that people who come and put their picture up on the wall.

Q: That's an interesting idea. And you made me think, suppose we had a map that has Newark streets that used to be and are not anymore. You're starting something.

Thomas: I believe. I believe that once you put it out there, they will come and do this.

Q: Very good.

Thomas: As an activity to start.

Q: Well, I hope that you'll get in touch with me sometime when you've gotten into what you want to do with your things, and when you start to do. If you're gonna make the contacts that you've had and ask people to follow through as you suggest. I would love to hear from you.

Thomas: Yeah, I will. Because I think people should be do that. You see, people don't do what

they're not asked to do.

Q: And not everyone can think of what you think of.

Thomas: That's right.

Q: They don't have anything against it. They just didn't think of it.

Thomas: I just believe that there was one hesitation. And did you ever live on such and such street in 1950, will you please bring a picture with your name on it, and put it on our board of honor. You'd be surprised by just what's gonna come out. You'd be surprised by the pictures that are gonna come out.

Q: Well good. It sounds that you are optimistic and I like that.

Thomas: No. You know what. Because each time it comes up on the radio, and you start talking sincerely about Krueger Mansion people respond. People respond. And then I think that if you just start talking about it and ask people to bring their pictures in, and put their name and stuff on it, you'll be surprised. You will be surprised. People want their pictures up.

Q: So you can see us proceeding with the Krueger project and stimulating more to make the future meaningful and for young people of the future to be able to look back and see what happened before, who was here before. And as you said, upon whose shoulders we stand. Because someone has to help them to know.

Thomas: That's right.

Q: And I can see that you are one of those people. So I really look forward to hearing from you.

Thomas: There's a difference. As for these things, you have some of them up on the wall. And nobody could ever pay for it. But the people can. And I had that thought in the hospital. And I tell you who came and said to me in the hospital, and that was a vision I had when I came out.

Q: He's a theater man.

Thomas: Yeah, he's a theater man., He told me, oh, he says, only I can tell you this. My mother Edna she say, my mother can't see too clearly. I wonder what you're all doing over there.

Q: Well, Mrs. Thomas, this has been a very great pleasure. And I think that your recording is going to be important to the work of the Krueger Scott Committee. Well, we'll be happy to be in touch with you again. Thank you very much.

END OF INTERVIEW